

THE CHRISTMAS GIFT OF PEACE A Savior Is Born – Part 4

Today it's really rare to find people who are at peace.
It's a rare quality.
And yet it is one of the reasons we celebrate Christmas.
Jesus came to give us peace.

About seven hundred years before the very first Christmas,
Isaiah who was a prophet
predicted that the Savior of the world was going to come
and that he would be called the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6,

“A child has been born for us and God has given us a Son and he will be called the Prince of Peace.”

He's talking about Jesus

At the very first Christmas
when the angels appeared to the shepherds they said,

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will toward men.”

So, Isaiah announces peace and the angels announce peace.
And when Jesus gets his own ministry it's about peace on earth.
In fact, before he goes back to heaven he says this –

“I am giving you the gift of peace, the kind of peace that only I can give!”

He says the kind of gift that I give

nobody else can give to you.
You can't get it in a bottle. You can't get it in a pill.
You can't get it in an experience or in a book.
The kind of peace I give..... only I can give it.

It isn't like the peace that this world gives.
What is the kind of peace that this world gives?
It's phony and it's fragile. It doesn't last.
How many peace treaties have been broken in history?
Practically every one.

You may have had a very good year
or you may have had a really tough year.
As we come to the end of 2022,
some of you undoubtedly are pretty tired.
You're fatigued, you're worn out.
You've had a tough year. It's been stressful for you.

If that's true you picked a good service to come to
because we're going to look at
how you get the peace of God in your life.

There are three different kinds of peace in the Bible
There's actually 790 verses talking about peace
So, we're going to look at every one today! *I'm just kidding!*

When you categorize them
they all come down to three categories.
You might write these down.

The three kinds of peace –
There's spiritual peace,

There's emotional peace
and there's relational peace.
Spiritual, emotional and relational.

There's eternal peace – that's with God. – that's Spiritual
There is internal peace – that's with yourself. – That's emotional
And there is external peace – with other people –
that's Relational

So, let's look at these three kinds of peace

The first kind of peace that Jesus came to give is...

1. Peace with God.

Peace with God. That's spiritual peace.
This is the most important because it affects everything else.

You know when a relationship is out of whack,
when you're in tension with a husband or a wife,
a boyfriend, a girlfriend, nothing else seems to matter.
When you have a strain or a conflict in a relationship
it really just robs you of your peace,
robs you of your joy.

Yet, nothing does that more
than being out of whack with God.
The Bible says the first thing Jesus came to do
is restore peace between us and God.

2 Corinthians 5,

God sent Christ to make peace between himself and us.

Why do we need this? I'll tell you why.
Because anytime I go my own way,
I say, "I think I know better than God.
I know what God says to do but I'm not going to do that.
I'm going to make up my own rules.
In fact, I'm going to pretend to be God.
I'm going to be the Lord of my own life.
I'm going to be the master of my own life.
I'm not going to do what the Bible says to do.
I'm going to do what I want to do."

When I try to pretend I'm God, I disobey God,
I fight God, I ignore what God says to do,
that's an act of rebellion.
It's an act of revolt.
It really puts me in conflict with God
and the Bible says there's no peace there.
I get disconnected.
That's why God feels a million miles away.

God doesn't want you to live disconnected from him.
He made you to be connected to him.
So here's what the Bible says –

Romans 5:

"Since we are made right with God by faith in Christ, we have peace with God because of what Jesus has done for us."

We have peace with God because of what Jesus has done for us.
Peace with God doesn't come from what you do.
Peace with God comes from what Jesus Christ *did* on the cross.
It's not what you do.
You can't be a nice person to get peace with God.

You get peace with God
through what Jesus Christ did for you.
That's what Christmas is all about.

Look at the next verse:

“Even though we were his enemies, God made peace with us, [he took the initiative.] because his Son died for our sins. Now that we're at peace with God, we will be saved for eternity by his Son's life.”

Look at this verse

“Jesus sacrificed for our sins once and for all when he offered himself on the cross.”

He gave himself to pay for all of our sins.
That's the first kind of peace – peace with God.

The second kind of peace is ...

2. Peace within.

Within me. That's emotional peace.
The Bible has a word for this emotional peace,
the peace that comes inside of me.
It's called the peace *of* God.
When I have peace *with* God
then I get the peace *of* God inside me.
This is the one that makes me feel good.

Colossians 3:15 says,

“Let the PEACE OF GOD rule IN your heart. . .”

Notice *in*. It's inside of you. It's internal. It's emotional

The word for “peace” in the Bible in the Hebrew is the word *shalom*. You’ve heard this word. *Shalom* means more than just ending of hostilities. It means well-being. It means happiness. It means harmony. It means serenity. It has a lot of different meanings. Whatever problem you have God has a corresponding peace.

For those with a broken heart, he gives us comforting peace.
For those with a confused heart, he gives us guiding peace.
For those when we have a shamed heart,
he gives us forgiving peace.
When we have a worried heart, he gives us confident peace.

God has a peace for every problem.
Whatever problem. You’ve got a financial problem?
There’s a financial peace promise in Scripture.
You’ve got a physical problem?
There’s a physical peace promise in Scripture.
God says I don’t want you to worry about anything.
You have a bitter-problem?
He says I’ll give you forgiveness.
So, there’s peace within me.

Then there’s the third kind of peace...

3. Peace with others.

This is relational peace.
Relational peace is the fact that
the further away we get from God

the more it messes up our relationships with everybody else.

You want to strengthen your marriage? Get close to God.
Because if you really get close to God,
The more out of whack you are with God,
the more out of whack you're going to be with other people.
And the further away I get from God,
the more cranky I get with you.
That's just the way God wired us.

The world is not getting more peaceful.
The world is getting more conflicted.
And we see it happening all around.
The only way we're going to have peace
is when we're unified as children of God.

The Bible says this in

Ephesians 2:

*Christ brought us all together through his death on the Cross.
The Cross gets us to embrace each other, and end the hostility
between different groups.*

When we have the Prince of Peace in our lives
then we're going to have peace with each other.

You look around
and you see all of the cities that are aflame
with injustice and crime and racism
and all these kind of things.

The Bible says in

Galatians 3:28,

“In Christ’s family there is no division between Jew and Gentile, slave or free, or even male and female. In Christ we’re all equal and the same. We’re all in a common relationship with Jesus.”

These three kinds of peace build on each other.

First, I have to have peace with God.

When I have the peace with God
then I get the peace of God
and I start feeling good about me.

When I start feeling good about me
I’ve got peace within myself,
then I can have peace with you.

Things that used to tick me off and irritate me,
they don’t bother me so much anymore.
Because if I’m at peace
then things just don’t bother me.

These three kinds of peace start with Jesus.

And here are 3 steps to gaining that peace

**1. YOU MUST *EXPERIENCE* A LIFE CHINGING
MOMENT**

The first thing I have to do is
I must experience, what I call, a moment of clarity.
I’m hoping you’re going to experience a moment of clarity
in this service this morning

A moment of clarity is a life changing moment
that transforms you forever.
You are never the same again
because all of a sudden
you see things like you've never seen them before.
All of a sudden
you see God as he really is,
not as you were brought up to believe he was.
You see yourself as you really are
not like you think you are
or not like what your parents told you you were.
You see yourself as you really are.
It is a moment of clarity
and you go, I get it! I get God! I get me!

You see other people as they really are
not as you've been told they were.
Not as you thought they were
but as they really are.

You see your past clearly.
Not the way you re-wrote it.
You see your present clearly.
And you see your future clearly.

God wants you to have a moment of clarity.

In the very first Christmas
every one of those people had a moment of clarity.

Joseph had a moment of clarity in a dream.
He had a dream and all of a sudden he goes,

“Okay. I get it.

I understand what’s going to happen. It makes sense.”

Sometimes people have a moment of clarity through a dream.

The wise men had a moment of clarity in nature.

They’re out looking at the stars.

Mary had a moment of clarity

when she understood the Word of God that was spoken to her.

The shepherds had a moment of clarity

when there was a miracle and they go,

“Let’s go check this one out!”

When you have a moment of clarity

you stop blaming other people for your unhappiness.

You’re as happy as you choose to be.

You can’t blame anyone but YOU

When you have a moment of clarity

you stop blaming other people

and you realize the biggest problem I’ve got..... is me.

Me. I am the problem.

Jesus said it like this in

Luke 11:

Make sure that the light you think you have is not really darkness.”

What does he mean by that?

He’s saying we all have an amazing ability to deceive ourselves.

You lie to yourself more

than you lie to anybody else.

And you do it all the time.

And here's the problem:
Until you have a moment of clarity
you don't understand what it feels like to have real peace.

You need the moment of claritywhere you go,
There's actually a better way to live
than how I'm living right now.

The root cause of all my stress
is thinking that I know better than God does.

2. YOU MUST *EXPRESS* AN ATTITUDE OF HUMILITY

The second thing that leads to peace is
to express an attitude of humility.

God blesses humility.
The Bible says this in

James 4:6:

God opposes the prideful [that means every time I'm prideful I'm on the opposite side of God. God opposes the proud...] but gives grace to the humble."

Grace is the power you need to have peace in your life.
God opposes the prideful but he gives grace to the humble.

So, here's the exchange.
I exchange my vanity for his serenity.
That's what happens.

I have been walking with God for many years.
One of the things I've learned is
that God is not impressed with my whining.
He's not impressed.
He doesn't move by my griping & complaining

What does touch his heart is humility.
Humbly asking God: God I need help.
When I say that
God just opens the flood gates of heaven
and pours out his grace and his mercy and his peace.

He says, I want you to come and express an attitude of humility.

One of the ways you do that
is just admit God is God and I'm not.

Isaiah 26:12

Lord, grant peace, for all we have and all we are has come from you."

I realize as we end this year
some of you had a really tough year.
Some of you are probably going through
a really tough time right now.
Some of you are probably barely hanging on.
Let me tell you something. We're all broken.
You're broken. You're broken. *You* are broken.
I'm broken.
You're deeply loved but you're also deeply flawed.
That's why you don't have peace.
That's why you walk around with stress.
That's why you're sick and tired of being sick and tired.

That's why you can't solve your problems.
That's why you get fearful and you hide your insecurities.
Because you're broken.
Sin has broken every one of us.
But we're deeply loved.
And we come to God first in a moment of clarity
and then in an attitude of humility.

if your heart is broken –
some of you have had your heart broken this year.
Here's a verse for you:

“The Lord is close to those whose hearts are breaking; [if your heart is breaking right now God is close to you.] he rescues those who are humbly sorry for their sins.”

The Bible calls it “the peace that passes understanding.”
It's peace that you have
and nobody could explain why you have it
because there is no reason why you should have it.
But its possible Even in dark, dark days.

The Bible gives us a practical way to express humility.
Philippians 4 says this:
“Don't worry about anything...”
To me,
That's the most difficult verse in the Bible
Don't worry about anything.
That is the hardest command to keep in the Bible.
Not the one that says, don't murder, don't steal.
No, The hardest command in the Bible
is that one right there.
Don't worry about anything.

You break it every day of your life.
Worry is assuming responsibility
That God never meant for you to have.
And worry is the opposite of peace.

He says, “*Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.*”

He gives you an alternative.
He says you can pray or you can panic.
It’s your choice.

So, what do I do to get on the path to peace?
You need a moment of clarity,
you need an attitude of humility
and you need

3. EXPECTANCY

YOU MUST *EXPECT* JESUS TO HELP

God does what we expect him to do in our lives.
This is the faith factor.

I want to sum up everything
I’ve been trying to say to you today in one sentence.

Matthew 11. These are the words of Jesus Christ.
Come to ME, all of you who are tired and worn out from carrying heavy loads, [Anybody in the house feel that way? Yeah.] Come to me all you who are tired and worn out and

carrying heavy loads, and I will... [...give you a whole lot more to do. That's not what it says. ... It says, I will give you rest. Yoke up with me and learn from me For I am gentle and humble, and you'll find peace and rest for your soul.]

That phrase "peace and rest for your soul."
That's much, much deeper than physical rest.
That's soul rest. That's inside rest.

So, the antidote to an overloaded soul
is not time away on vacation
It's not a time management program.
It's not a philosophy. It's not a pill. It's not a plan.
It's a person. He says come to me.

So, you want peace
It all starts here:

1. YOU MUST COME TO JESUS

That's the first step if I want to exchange my panic
for God's peace.
My worry for God's worship.
My fear for God's faith.
My anxiety for God's tranquility.
My vanity for God's serenity.
I make that exchange by coming to Jesus.

That's not a one-time thing.
You do it every moment and every day.
And you keep coming back and back and back.
Jesus says come to me.

The answer for your peace is a person.
His name is Jesus

2. YOU MUST CONNECT WITH JESUS

Or yoke up with Him.
A yoke is a piece of wood
that puts two cattle together to pull a cart.
That's called a yoke.
You can yoke up two horses
or you can yoke up two cows to pull a cart,

What is the purpose of a yoke?
To make the load easier by sharing it.
A yoke is a symbol of partnership.

God is saying
I didn't intend for you to pull all your worries,
pull all your burdens, pull all your stress,
pull all your responsibilities by yourself
That's why you're tired all the time.
Jesus says I'll share it. Yoke up with me.

He says connect with me. Put on my yoke.

I exchange my heavy burden for his light burden.
He says, "Put me in charge."
Every time you just yoke up with me the peace is going to come.

3. LET JESUS CHANGE ME

He says you need to learn from me.
He's saying there's something you don't know
that I know that I can teach you.
Here's the thing, let Jesus change me.
I come to Jesus, I connect with Jesus and I let Jesus change me.

What are the two biggest causes of stress in your life?
You might not call them this
but this is what they are.

Arrogance and aggression.
Those cause stress.
Let me explain
Aggression is we don't want to wait on anything.
We want it now.
I'm want to buy it now even if I can't afford it.
I'll put it on the credit card.
We buy things we don't need
with money we don't have
to impress people we don't even like.

The other thing he says is arrogance
which is the opposite of humility.
Arrogance is when I try to control everything.
The more insecure I am the more picky I get.

The antidote is gentleness and humility.

Isaiah 26

You, Lord give true peace to those who depend on you, because they trust you."

Let's just cut to the chase.

Peace is yours. This is the gift of peace.
The Prince of Peace came at Christmas. My peace I give you.
Not as the world gives.
You were made for more.
You were not made to live under tension, stress, fear, anxiety,
worry, depression – all of those things
for the rest of your life.
You were made for the peace that passes understanding.

I'm going to lead you in a peace prayer right now.
It doesn't matter if you actually say the words.
What matters is the attitude of your heart.

When I pray this prayer aloud
you can in your mind go, "Me too God."
God knows your thoughts.
He knows what you're thinking right now.
So, if you say, okay, I'm ready.
I want peace with God.
I want the peace of God –
And I want to begin to have peace with others.

It starts with the moment of clarity that you are not God.
Then humility – God, I need your help.
Then dependency – I come to you, I connect with you,
I call on you and I want to let you change me.

Let's bow our heads.

Prayer:

As I pray this prayer just say in your mind this Christmas... Just say, dear God you know the anxiety in my life. You even know the fears that I don't even know about. Jesus Christ, you say you're the Prince of Peace and you're coming to give the gift of peace that only you can give. I need it and I want it. So I want to take these steps. First I pray that you will flood my heart with light so that I can see things as they really are. Help me God to see you as you really are not as I've imagined you. Help me to see myself as I really am not as I pretend to be. Help me to see other people the way they really are. Help me to see my problems as they actually are not as I have imagined them to be. I want to make sure that the light that I think I have is not really darkness. I need a moment of clarity. So I'm expressing today an attitude of humility. God, I will say to you all I have and all I am has come from you. God, you've promised to be close to those whose hearts are breaking. And you've promised to rescue those who are humbly sorry for their sins. God, would you do that for me? Would you be close to me? Would you rescue me? Would you teach me how to stop worrying and start praying so that I can experience the peace of God that passes all understanding? Jesus, you've said to come to you if I'm tired and worn out, to yoke up with you, to learn from you. So I do this tonight. I say, Jesus Christ, as much as I know how I come to you. I want to connect with you. I want a relationship. I want a friendship with you. I want to learn to love you and know you and get to know you better every day. I give you permission to make changes in me that I've always wanted and that you've wanted to make. Lord, you've promised to give true peace to those who depend on you and trust you. So today I'm saying I want to trust you

with my life for the rest of my life. I want you to be the general manager of my life. I want you to be in charge. And I want to be connected. I want to be yoked up to you. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. Help me to understand that more. And help me to follow you in humility and in gentleness. I humbly pray this in your name. Amen.